

SECRET

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MAR 94

TEXT:

1. REF ATTACK IS PART OF AN ONGOING AND LONGRUNNING HYSTERIA IN GUATEMALA CONCERNING ALLEGATIONS THAT U.S. CITIZENS ARE KIDNAPPING GUATEMALAN BABIES IN ORDER TO SELL THEM OR THEIR ORGANS IN THE U.S. THIS HAS BEEN GOING ON FOR SEVERAL YEARS AND HAS CULMINATED IN THIS MOST RECENT ACT. THERE IS NO EVIDENCE OF THIS CAMPAIGN BEING PART OF AN ANTI-US MILITARY CAMPAIGN, ESPECIALLY SINCE IT HAS BEEN DIRECTED AGAINST INDIVIDUAL US CITIZENS AND NOT AGAINST THE FUERTES CAMINOS PRESENCE. WE DO NOT HAVE AN ELN HERE SO CANNOT COMMENT ON THIS, BUT IT IS UNLIKELY THAT NARCOS ARE BEHIND THIS. THE ATTACK ON THE US WOMAN WAS CERTAINLY NOT THE RESULT OF A GUATEMALAN POLICE OR MILITARY CAMPAIGN DIRECTED AGAINST US CITIZENS.

2. THE LOCAL HYSTERIA IS DIRECTED AGAINST EASILY IDENTIFIABLE US NATIONALS CARRYING BACKPACKS (LOCALS BELIEVE THE BABY PARTS ARE STORED IN THE BACKPACK FOR TRANSPORTATION TO THE US). THIS ATTITUDE IS MOST PREVALENT IN THE INTERIOR OF THE COUNTRY WHERE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE TEND TO BE LESS EDUCATED AND MORE SUPERSTITIOUS. THE RECENT INCIDENT RESULTED FROM THE AMERICAN CITIZEN SPEAKING TO SOME GUATEMALAN CHILDREN AND SEVERAL GUATEMALAN ONLOOKERS ACCUSING HER OF TRYING TO KIDNAP THE CHILDREN. THE SITUATION WAS AGGRAVATED BY STRIKING HIGHWAY WORKERS WHO WHIPPED THE CROWD INTO A FRENZY AND ATTACKED THE AMERICAN CITIZEN WHO HAD SOUGHT REFUGE WITH A LOCAL JUDGE. THE LOCAL POLICE FORCE WAS UNABLE TO PROVIDE PROTECTION FROM THE CROWD AND THE MILITARY FORCES FROM COBAN ARRIVED TOO LATE TO PREVENT THE UNFORTUNATE VIOLENCE.

APPROVED FOR RELEASE

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[REDACTED]

3. THE EMBASSY IS REQUESTING THE STATE DEPARTMENT UPGRADE THE TRAVEL ADVISORY ON GUATEMALA. THE PEACE CORPS HAS WITHDRAWN ITS TWO VOLUNTEERS IN SAN CRISTOBAL AND HAS RECALLED ALL VOLUNTEERS TO GUATEMALA CITY FOR THE EASTER WEEKEND. THE AMBASSADOR HAS DIRECTED THAT ALL US EMPLOYEES LIMIT THEIR TRAVEL TO REMOTE AREAS AND KEEP A LOW PROFILE THROUGHOUT GUATEMALA.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] THE EMBASSY IS ALSO READDRESSING NEXT WEEK'S SERIES OF STAFFDELS.

[REDACTED]

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